

## Mississippi Small-Business Owners React to Governor Barbour's Speech in Nation's Capitol

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### State's Chief Executive Delivers Upbeat Remarks About Katrina Recovery at NFIB's Small-Business Summit

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 19, 2006 – In a passionate speech here today to members of the National Federation of Independent Business, Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour recounted how far his state has rebounded from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Barbour's remarks were made at NFIB's Small-Business Summit, which is being attended by more than 500 hundred small-business owners and activists from across the country.

"Katrina represents a tragedy of profound proportions," said Barbour, noting the storm left "thousands of small businesses in shambles" before adding government aid and the indomitable spirit of Mississippians helped turn the tide quickly. "In the truest entrepreneurial spirit exemplified by members of NFIB, there has never been a better time to invest in Mississippi."

Barbour, who used the occasion to market opportunities in Mississippi, said 10 months after the storm debris cleanup is 99 percent complete, roads and bridges are being rebuilt, workforce training is in high gear and most school operations are back to normal. "The outpouring of support and generosity from across the country has been overwhelming, and the financial resources authorized by Congress and the president are proving to be essential," said Barbour, adding it is the private sector above all else that will help the Gulf Coast surpass what it once was.

Housing, however, remains the state's biggest issue, according to Barbour, who said temporary housing installations near the Gulf Coast are "both a blessing and a potential curse as the 2006 hurricane season begins." Asked by one audience member about the greatest lesson learned, Barbour drew

laughter by saying “you hope the next storm misses you.” He then added it’s essential to have a good, strong plan and to ensure “people take self-preparation seriously.”

“I can’t remember a time when I was more proud to be from Mississippi,” said Linda Ferguson, a second-generation owner of Safeway Cleaners in Pearl, reacting to today’s speech. “Governor Barbour exemplifies leadership in its finest form.”

“Governor Barbour continues to impress me by showing how compassionate he is, while helping us realize that government cannot solve every problem for every person,” said Margaret Remy, owner of Quick Prints in Meridian and also in Washington to hear Gov. Barbour and meet her legislators. “Mississippi’s response under Governor Barbour certainly reinforces government must do everything it can to help, but that it can’t do everything.”

“Governor Barbour has earned nothing but high marks for his hands-on management and proactive approach to helping small-business owners and Gulf Coast residents recover after Katrina,” NFIB/Mississippi State Director Ron Aldridge said. “Mississippi has been blessed to have strong leadership under such difficult circumstances.”

Gov. Barbour is one of several well-known political and economic experts speaking this week to entrepreneurs at NFIB’s Small-Business Summit. Over the next few days, more than 500 small-business owners and activists from across the country will also hear from NBC News Chief White House Correspondent David Gregory, eBay CEO Meg Whitman and several members of Congress. Tomorrow, Summit delegates will take the voice of small business to Capitol Hill, meeting face-to-face with their lawmakers to let them know how decisions in Washington affect small businesses everywhere.

The National Federation of Independent Business is the leading small-business advocacy group in Mississippi and the nation, with 5,000 and 600,000 members respectively . Note to editors and reporters: To arrange an interview with Mr. Aldridge, Ms. Ferguson or Ms. Remy, please call Jim Brown at [REDACTED] . Photos from the event are available upon request by e-mailing [REDACTED]

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The National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) is Mississippi's and the nation's largest small-business advocacy group. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization founded in 1943, NFIB represents the consensus views of its 600,000 members in Washington and all 50 state capitals. For more information on NFIB/Mississippi, visit [REDACTED] [REDACTED] NFIB is now offering the latest NFIB news and information via RSS feeds. To subscribe to one or more feeds, or to get more information about the topic-specific feeds available, please go to [REDACTED]